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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/896,471	06/29/2001	Mary F. Hollinger	60027.0004US01/BS00318	9254
39262	7590	10/21/2004	EXAMINER	
BELLSOUTH CORPORATION P.O. BOX 2903 MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55402-0903			LIN, WEN TAI	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			2154	

DATE MAILED: 10/21/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/896,471

Applicant(s)

HOLLINGER ET AL.

Examiner

Wen-Tai Lin

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 29 June 2001.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-22 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-22 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 21 June 2001 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

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DETAILED ACTION

1. Claims 1-22 are presented for examination.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

3. Claims 1-8, 10-18 and 21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Glazer et al.[U.S. PGPub 20020032588].

4. As to claim 1, Glazer teaches the invention as claimed including: an appointment setting system for assigning a service order to a network resource, comprising:

an appointment negotiator operative to receive a service order from a customer and to deliver an appointment confirmation and an appointment rejection to the

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customer [e.g., paragraphs 12, 16 and 21; note that in a fully automated scheduling system, the web server interacting with the customers would serve as an appointment negotiator];

an appointment control system operative to receive the service order from the appointment negotiator and to determine the ability of a network resource to fulfill the service order [14, Fig.1; paragraph 13; note that the controller of Fig.1 may assume the functions of a negotiator and the appointment control]; and

a dispatch database operative to maintain a dispatch database record of commitments previously assigned to the network resource [paragraph 14];

wherein the appointment control system will deliver the appointment confirmation to the appointment negotiator and assigns the service order to the network resource, in response to a determination that the network resource can fulfill the service order [paragraph 19]; and

wherein the appointment control system will deliver the appointment rejection to the appointment negotiator, in response to a determination that the network resource cannot fulfill the service order [paragraph 24].

5. As to claim 2, Glazer further teaches that the appointment control system is a computer-implemented system that is electronically accessible by the appointment negotiator [paragraph 13].

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6. As to claim 3, Glazer further teaches that the dispatch database record is an electronic record comprising a network resource schedule [paragraphs 13-14].

7. As to claim 4, Glazer further teaches that the dispatch database record is an electronic record comprising a set of tasks to which the network resource can be assigned [paragraphs 14-15; e.g., certain tasks can be performed on certain days or time-slots due to equipment availability].

8. As to claim 5, Glazer further teaches that the dispatch database further comprises appointments assigned to another network resource [paragraphs 13-14; i.e., since the controller maintains a customer database, which is shared among distinct sponsoring organizations].

9. As to claims 6-7, Glazer further teaches that the appointment control system is further operative to determine whether a change has occurred to the dispatch database record. The appointment control system further determines whether the change affects the appointment confirmation [paragraphs 8, 17-18].

10. As to claim 8, Glazer further teaches that the appointment control system is further operative to automatically transmit the appointment rejection to the appointment negotiator, in response to a determination that the change in response to a determination that the change affects the appointment confirmation [Note that in view of

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Glazer's teachings at paragraphs 8, 17-18, an email is sent through the controller (which has integrated at least part of the human interaction functionality) to an affected customer].

11. As to claim 10, Glazer further teaches that the appointment control system is further operative to receive the service order from a third party through a third party gateway [paragraphs 13-14; i.e., since the same central controller is shared among several remotely located distinct sponsoring organizations and the connection is Internet-based, it is clear that Glazer can receive service order from customers using a different network but are connected to the controller via a gateway].

12. As to claim 11, since the features of this claim can also be found in claims 1-8, it is rejected for the same reasons set forth in the rejection of claims 1-8 above.

13. As to claims 14-15, Glazer further teaches that the step of determining whether a network resource can fulfill the service order comprises accessing the dispatch database to determine whether the network resource can be near the appointment location approximately at the appointment time, or is committed to another service order at the appointment time [paragraph 15].

14. As to claim 16, Glazer further teaches that the step of updating a dispatch database to reflect a reduction in a capacity value associated with the network resource

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comprises modifying a dispatch database record to indicate a commitment of the network resource to perform the service task at the appointment time and at the appointment location [paragraph 14; note that updating a database is part of the maintenance of a database].

15. As to claims 12-13, 17-18 and 21, since the features of these claims can also be found in claims 1-8, 10-11 and 14-16, they are rejected for the same reasons set forth in the rejection of claims 1-8, 10-11 and 14-16 above.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

16. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

17. Claims 9, 19-20 and 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Glazer et al.(hereafter "Glazer") [U.S. PGPub 20020032588], as applied to claims 1-8, 10-18 and 21 above.

18. As to claim 9, Glazer does not specifically teach that the appointment control system is further operative to reassign the service order to another network resource, in

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response to a determination that the change affects the appointment confirmation. However, Glazer teaches that: (1) the same central controller can be shared among several remotely located distinct sponsoring organizations with a customer database [paragraphs 13-14] and (2) customers may choose their preferential time slots for service [paragraph 5]. Additionally, it is well known in the art of medical services that a physician may belong to simultaneously belong to different service networks (such as insurance programs or hospitals).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to allow Glazer's controller to reschedule a customer/patient of one sponsoring organization to be serviced at another sponsoring organization, because such collaboration effort could serve emergency needs and improve the quality of service.

19. As to claims 19-20 and 22, since the features of these claims can also be found in claims 1-18 and 21 they are rejected for the same reasons set forth in the rejection of claims 1-18 and 21 above.

20. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure:

Whyel [U.S. PGPub 20010027481];

Cummings et al. [U.S. Pat. No. 6345260]; and

DeLorme et al. [U.S. Pat. No. 5948040].

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21. A shortened statutory period for response to this action is set to expire 3 (three) months and 0 days from the mail date of this letter. Failure to respond within the period for response will result in ABANDONMENT of the application (see 35 U.S.C. 133, M.P.E.P. 710.02, 710.02(b)).

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Wen-Tai Lin whose telephone number is (703)305-4875. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday (8:00-5:00) .

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John Follansbee can be reached on (703)305-8498. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are as follows:


(703)872-9306 for official communications; and

(703)746-5516 for status inquires draft communication.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703)305-3900.

Wen-Tai Lin

October 4, 2004


10/4/04